REMARKS

Applicants have amended their claims in order to further clarify various aspects of the present invention. Specifically, claim 1 has been amended to recite a cassette for receiving plural substrates at a position of which an upper region is open to a cassette transfer path, rather than reciting a cassette for receiving plural substrates in air. In connection with claim 1 as presently amended, note, for example, Figs. 1 and 2, showing cassette 1a on cassette table 2a, with the position at which cassette 1a is provided being open to, e.g., the cassette transfer path (including, for example, the transfer robot shown in Fig. 2 and tracks shown in Fig. 1).

Applicants have also added claim 9 to the application. Claim 9, an independent claim, recites a method of using a conveyor system. The method steps recited transfer substrates between specifically recited apparatus of the conveyor system, the conveyor system being for processing substrates in plural vacuum processing chamber installation portions.

The undersigned particularly directs attention to U.S. Patent No. 4,851,101 to Hutchinson, cited on page 2 of the Form PTO-1449 (equivalent) submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement Under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 filed July 12, 2000, in the above-identified application. It is respectfully submitted that, particularly as presently amended, U.S. Patent No. 4,851,101, either alone or in combination with the teachings of other references of record, would have neither disclosed nor would have suggested the presently claimed

subject matter, including, inter alia, the cassette for receiving plural substrates at a position of which an upper region is open to a cassette transfer path. As seen in U.S. Patent No. 4,851,101 to Hutchinson, as well as the other Hutchinson patent of record (U.S. Patent No. 4,715,764) and U.S. Patent No. 4,917,556 to Stark, et al., the cassette is at a position of which an upper region is not open to the cassette transfer path.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to claim 1 by the current amendments. The marked-up version is on the attached pages the first page of which is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE".

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 503.30414V18) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims presently in the application as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A method of transferring a substrate, using an apparatus comprising:

a cassette for receiving plural substrates [in air] at a position of which an upper region is open to a cassette transfer path;

an atmospheric transferring device for transferring, one by one, said substrates;

a vacuum transferring chamber having a vacuum transferring means;

plural vacuum processing chambers for processing, one by one, said substrates;

a device having a first lock chamber in which said substrates are carried in and carried out, one by one, between said atmospheric transferring device and said vacuum transferring chamber and a second lock chamber in which said substrates are carried in and carried out, one by one, between said atmospheric transferring device and said vacuum transferring chamber; and

opening and closing devices for opening and closing one of the first and second lock chambers each time a substrate is carried into said one of the first and second lock chambers, one by one, and each time a substrate is carried out of said one of the first and second lock chambers,

one by one,

wherein the method comprises the steps of:

taking out, one by one, said substrates from said cassette by said atmospheric transferring device;

carrying in a substrate taken out from the cassette, to one of said first and second lock chambers in air;

closing off said one of said first and second lock chambers, from said atmospheric transferring device, by using the opening and closing devices;

evacuating said one of said first and second lock chambers;

transferring said substrate to any one of said plural vacuum processing chambers from said one of said first and second lock chambers in a vacuum, through said vacuum transferring chamber;

processing said substrate in said one of said plural vacuum processing chambers;

transferring said substrate, which has been subjected to processing, to one of said first and second lock chambers in the vacuum through said vacuum transferring chamber;

closing said one of said first and second lock chambers, to which the substrate is transferred after the processing, from said vacuum transferring chamber, by using the opening and closing devices, and, after that, opening the one of the first and second lock chambers, having the substrate therein, to air, by using the opening and closing devices; and

taking out said substrate in said one of said first and second lock chambers, to which the substrate is transferred after the processing, by said atmospheric transferring device and receiving said substrate in said cassette.